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The President's Daily Brief

29 January 1973

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~~*Top Secret*~~ 25X1

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

29 January 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Sharp fighting persists in South Vietnam as both sides maneuver to improve their holdings. *(Page 1)*

[redacted] 25X1

[redacted] *(Page 2)* 25X1

Moscow and its Warsaw Pact allies state that they plan to send delegations to Vienna on Wednesday for preparatory talks on force reductions, and that they would defer until then the question of inviting other nations. *(Page 3)*

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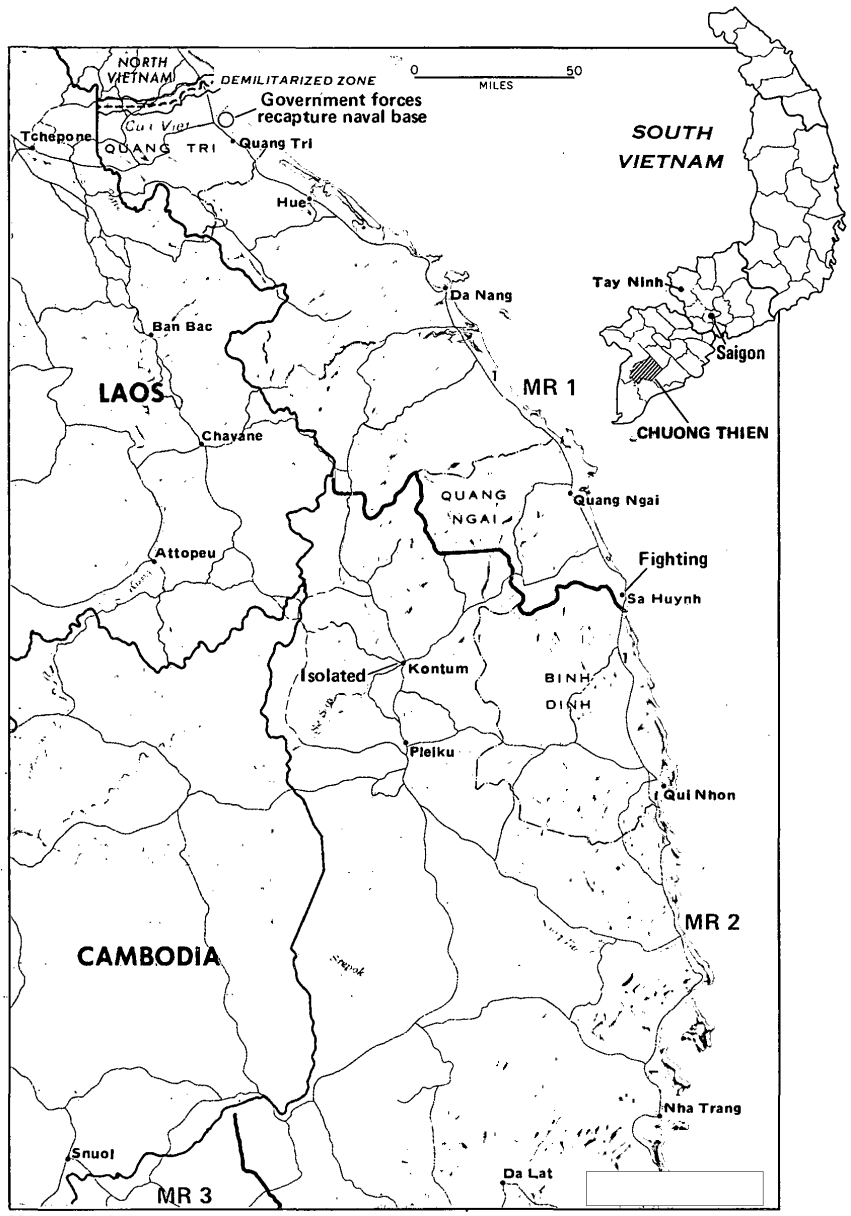

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VIETNAM

Sharp fighting continues throughout the countryside as both government and Communist forces maneuver to improve their territorial holdings. Most action since the official cease-fire has resulted from South Vietnamese efforts to roll back enemy gains made just before the deadline.

Some of the heaviest fighting centers on the provincial capital of Tay Ninh, where Communist forces apparently control portions of the city as well as stretches of the roads linking it with Saigon. Government defenders, with the help of reinforcements and substantial South Vietnamese air and artillery support, have recaptured several nearby hamlets that were lost on Saturday.

Government forces in the Saigon area have made some progress retaking hamlets and villages. The main highway connecting the capital with the populous delta region has been reopened. In Chuong Thien Province, where portions of two district capitals apparently were overrun early in the weekend, all five capitals are now in government hands.

In the northern half of the country, fighting has been heaviest along coastal Route 1, notably in Binh Dinh and Quang Ngai provinces. Several district capitals were shelled, and Communist and government forces are still battling for control of Sa Huynh. In the central highlands street fighting was reported in Da Lat, and some Viet Cong flags were observed in Pleiku City. Kontum City remains isolated and several provincial and district centers are cut off by Communist roadblocks. On the government side, South Vietnamese Marines apparently recaptured a navy base at the mouth of the Cua Viet River in Quang Tri Province just prior to the cease-fire hour, despite a heavy North Vietnamese artillery barrage.

Much of the current fighting on the part of the South Vietnamese appears aimed at countering moves by Communist local forces to seize key road junctions and bridges that can be used to stop movement between government-held areas. [redacted] *South Vietnamese forces had been ordered to reclaim such areas even if it required fighting after the cease-fire deadline. Intercepts show that the Communists are similarly under orders to resist government efforts to reoccupy lost ground or encroach on formerly "liberated" areas.*

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CHINA-JAPAN

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FORCE REDUCTION TALKS

Moscow and its Warsaw Pact allies have replied to NATO that they plan to send delegations to Vienna on 31 January for preparatory talks on mutual force reductions. The Pact reply proposes that the question of inviting other states to participate be decided at these discussions. The note specified, however, that actual reductions be negotiated only by states whose territory and forces are directly involved.

The Soviets added orally that Romania and Bulgaria would be coming to the preparatory talks but would revert to observer status if it is decided that the area for reduction should not include these two states. Moscow reiterated its view that neutrals who so desire should eventually be permitted to participate in some capacity.

The Pact proposal to include neutrals in the force reduction talks has had the unintended effect of increasing support among neutral and Western countries for dealing with broad military issues at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Most neutral states think that if there is to be a general discussion of force reduction issues, it might as well take place at the CSCE while actual troop cuts are negotiated in the other conference.

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